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Executive Registry
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24 August 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Computers in the New Building

Fitz:

1. Good ideas die hard. In 1974 I tried to convince this Agency to put the computers into a building out in Reston or what is now the Dulles corridor. My fear was that our computer needs would expand and the data links being what they were it really didn't matter if our computers were downstairs or in Indianapolis. I also forecast at the time (with wisdom far beyond my years) that the support structure to sustain computer operation would dominate our life in this building, i.e., air conditioning, power, cables, etc. I was voted down for technical reasons proffered by people who really didn't want to move the computers--reasons which I felt were fallacious but I wasn't smart enough to counter them.

2. I worry that we may be revisiting the same mistake in the new building which has consumed too much time, money and tempers in this one. I therefore urge that you take a long, hard look at whether or not we want to use the premium space of a new Headquarters building for machines; whether it would not be prudent to put them in a plain but secure concrete structure, without frills, away from Headquarters in the low-rent district.

3. Don't listen to the sages that say that the miniaturization of electronics will free up now-computer space for people. The miniaturization will only free up existing computer space for future computer space because the computer requirements will continue to grow and grow and grow. Enough said.

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John N. McMahon

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